

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CU-02 /018 W

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R 221114Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4681

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: OEXC: CE, MV

SUBJECT: IVP PROGRAMS: MALDIVES AND SRI LANKA

REF: (A) COLOMBO 1410 (B) STATE 089194

1. AS RESULT RECENT VISIT TO MALDIVES IT BECAME APPARENT TO EMBASSY THAT MALDIVIAN GOVERNMENT (GOM) WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO OFFER OF IVP GRANT FOR TRANSITIONAL QUARTER OF FY 1976. WE NOW HAVE HIGH PRIORITY NEED FOR ADDITIONAL IVP GRANT UNDER SRI LANKA PROGRAM AND EMBASSY REQUESTS FY 76 GRANT FOR MALDIVES BE TRANSFERRED TO SRI LANKA.

2. NUBER TWO LEADER IN OPPOSITION UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) R. PREMADASA WOULD BE ABLE TO TRAVEL TO U.S. PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, 1976. EMBASSY HAS BEEN ANXIOUS TO PROVIDE PREMADASA OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT U.S. FOR SOME TIME, ALTHOUGH PREVIOUS EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS DID NOT LEAD TO FEASIBLE TRAVEL PLANS. EVERYTHING NOW APPEARS TO BE FAVORABLE FOR HIM TO TRAVEL TO U.S.

3. PREMADASA, NOW 52, HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN UNP SINCE 1950 AND IS SECOND ONLY TO OPPOSITION LEADER J.R. JAYEWARDENA. SHOULD UNP WIN IN ELECTIONS, SCHEDULED FOR 1977, PREMADASA IS CERTAIN TO BE PROMINENT AND INFLUENTIAL LEADER OF NEW GOVERNMENT. HE IS CURRENTLY UNP'S BEST DEBATER IN NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY, HARD-WORKING AND HARD-HITTING

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PARTY ORGANIZER AND CAMPAIGNER, AND HAS PLAYED MAJOR ROLE IN DRAWING UP NEW UNP PROGRAM WHICH

REFLECTS HIS DESIRE TO GIVE PARTY MORE POPULIST
IMAGE AND TO TRY TO TAKE PARTY TO PEOPLE. DURING
1965-70 UNP GOVERNMENT HE VISITED U.S.
UNDER LEADER GRANT PROGRAM IN 1967 WHEN HE WAS
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING.

4. IN SPITE OF PREVIOUS VISIT, EMBASSY BELIEVES
PREMADASA'S POSITION AND IMPORTANCE HAVE CHANGED
SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE THEN. AS RESULT, EMBASSY
STRONGLY RECOMMENDS IVP GRANT BE SHIFTED TO SRI
LANKA FROM MALDIVES SO THAT WE CAN NOMINATE
R. PREMADASA FOR FY 76 IVP GRANT.

5. ASSUME NEW AMBASSADOR WILL WISH TO DISCUSS
FY 77 IVP GRANT FOR MALDIVES DURING HIS FIRST
VISIT TO MALE.
PERKINS

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